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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC
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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KV](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: FIRST H1N1 DEATH CONFIRMED

REF: PRISTINA 487

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) On November 15 Kosovo authorities reported the first death attributable to the H1N1 influenza virus -- also known as swine flu. The patient was a 31-year old man from Glogovac/Glogovac, approximately 30 km from Pristina. He was hospitalized in critical condition on November 12 and treated with Tamiflu for two days prior to succumbing on November 14 to pneumonia brought on by the virus. Local health officials report that he was ill for three weeks before seeking medical attention, and that he was a heavy smoker, which affected his ability to fight the pneumonia. No other members of his family are ill, and he had not traveled outside of Kosovo prior to falling ill.

NEW LAB OPENS, RESULTS COME FASTER

2. (SBU) Since our report that the first suspected, but unconfirmed, H1N1 influenza cases had appeared in Kosovo (reftel), Kosovo has opened a new laboratory capable of testing for the virus. Rather than relying solely upon facilities outside the country to confirm cases of H1N1, local health officials now are able to perform H1N1 testing in Kosovo. The new lab, while not up to U.S. standards, does conduct quality control testing by sending some duplicate samples abroad for testing and confirmation. Thus far, all local test results have proved accurate in the comparison testing.

CONFIRMED H1N1 CASES NOW AT 39

3. (SBU) Whereas Kosovo authorities had previously told us that they suspected H1N1 was present, but had been unable to confirm it (reftel), they now tell us that there are 39 confirmed H1N1 cases in Kosovo. According to media reports, seven new cases of H1N1 were confirmed in the last week. All 39 Kosovo citizens with the virus are reported to be in stable condition. Health officials acknowledge that the sudden rise in confirmed cases is rapid, but add that the virus' penetration in Kosovo remains below expected levels. They also point out that local infection rates were misleadingly low because results from overseas testing had not been previously available.

COMMENT

¶4. (SBU) With improved local testing now available, we expect to see more rapid testing for the H1N1 virus, and most probably, a steady rise in the number of confirmed H1N1 cases in Kosovo. Poor nutrition, little or no health coverage, and the onset of winter make Kosovo's population vulnerable to illness. Combined with small stocks of anti-viral medications and lack of vaccine, these factors may well mean more deaths in the coming months.

DELL